THE SPIRITUAL REALM: AN EXISTENTIAL POSITION CONCERNING HUMAN NATURE AND COUNSELING

An abstract of a Field Report by
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The purpose of this paper is to present an existential position which deals with the spiritual realm and its relevancy to counseling.

The spiritual realm is that area on the continuum of human experience which is uniquely human. The foremost characteristic of that which is uniquely human is the human capacity to be conscious of the self.

The underlying variable responsible for that which is uniquely human is human reason. There is a functional relationship between human reason and all characteristics which are uniquely human. An important consequence of reason is free will and responsibility.

The primary motive of that which is uniquely human is the desire to attain existential fulfillment through the meaning derived from actualizing one's values, and the core of this primary motive is an individual's ultimate concern.

Spiritual health is a matter of one's own subjective experience. An individual's sense of spiritual health increases and decreases along with how well he satisfies his will to fulfillment.

When focusing on the spiritual realm during counseling, the client's experience of fulfillment is explored to discern if, or how, he satisfies his will to fulfillment. This exploration aids the client and the counselor in arriving at a more effective way for the client to attain existential fulfillment.

The spiritual realm is a vital aspect of one's total being, and thus must not be ignored by those in the preventive and curative health care fields.

THE SPIRITUAL REALM: AN EXISTENTIAL POSITION CONCERNING HUMAN NATURE AND COUNSELING

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The purpose of this paper is to present an existential position concerning human nature and counseling. This position deals with the spiritual realm, or with that which is uniquely human, and with its relevancy to counseling. An exploration of those characteristics which are uniquely human, as well as an application of these characteristics to a counseling focus, will be presented and discussed. Specific topics to be dealt with include: philosophical assumptions concerning the spiritual realm, spiritual motivation, spiritual health and illness, and spiritual counseling.

Philosophical Assumptions Concerning the Spiritual Realm

This position regarding human nature is mainly concerned with that area on the continuum of human experience regarded as the spiritual realm. The term "spiritual" will be used here to denote that area which is uniquely human. As Viktor Frankl defines the concept, "spiritual" does not necessarily have a primarily religious connotation; instead, it refers to uniquely human phenomena, contrasted to the subhuman phenomena that humans share with other animals. "Spiritual" is

that which is human in man.[1]

Spiritual used in this sense is similar to the usage of the existential term "Dasein." Dasein is an untranslatable word which designates the mode of existence which is distinctively human. The word is composed of sein, which means being, and da, which means there. Thus, Dasein refers to an individual as a being who is there and who is conscious of that fact. Human beings are beings who are conscious of, and therefore responsible for, their own existence. Human beings are distinguished from other beings because humans are conscious of their existence.[2]

It seems to me that all of life may be placed on a continuum: from a simple, single-celled organism, to the Supreme Being. As with all life, the experience of human beings occupies an area on the continuum, and although some of this area is overlapped by other living beings, there is a specific area on the continuum within the human area which is specifically and exclusively human; this area is the spiritual realm of man, and it is this area which this position addresses.

To articulate what composes the spiritual realm, or

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[1] Viktor E. Frankl, The Unconscious God (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), p. 23.

[2] Rollo May, "Contributions of Existential Psychotherapy," in Existence, eds. Rollo May, Ernest Angel, and Henri F. Ellenberger (New York: Basic Books, 1958), p. 41.

that which is uniquely human, one must understand that an absolute statement covering each human being would not be adequate or possible, for one can always find an exception to a rule. What must be articulated should address the generality of human experience, and should maintain that any deviation from this generality does not imply exclusion from that which is uniquely human. One who does not acquire the characteristics of that which is uniquely human nevertheless possesses a spiritual realm because of his inherent, potential nature.

What are the characteristics which are uniquely human? Briefly said, the foremost unique human characteristic is the human capacity of consciousness. Humans are conscious of the self and of the self being in the world. An individual has a self-concept and is conscious of the self existing in the world and through the world. Along with this capacity of consciousness of the self, humans also have the capacity to transcend the self and analyze the self's experience and component parts, e.g., humans can be conscious of consciousness. Humans have the capacity to be conscious of their potentials and can consciously make efforts to strive towards realizing those potentials. Consciousness of the self can lead to consciousness of personal purpose and intent, which can further lead to feelings of existential fulfillment or existential void.

Humans share many experiences of life with other living

beings, e.g., conditioning, instincts, drives, perceptions, etc., but because of the unique human capacity of consciousness of the self, these experiences are subjectively, or phenomenologically, processed from an existential perspective.

According to Hjelle and Ziegler, a phenomenological position asserts that what reality is thought, understood, or felt to be by an individual is that which is found within that individual's internal frame of reference. One's perceptions and experiences compose his reality and influence his actions. A phenomenological position holds as its basic doctrine that the psychological reality of phenomena is a function of the manner in which they are perceived. An individual does not directly reflect reality by his senses, but construes reality according to his private, subjective experience. This private, subjective experience can only completely be known by the individual who experiences it. To best understand an individual's behavior, one needs to observe his internal frame of reference. An explanation for why an individual thinks, feels and behaves in a certain way can only be found by understanding how that individual perceives and interprets the world.[1] This is not to say that all experiences shared with other living beings are processed in this fashion; rather, only those experiences which an individual becomes aware of

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[1] Larry A. Hjelle and Daniel J. Ziegler, Personality Theories (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), pp. 294-295.

worldy state of being.

It seems to me that the underlying variable responsible for all of which is uniquely human is human reason. There is a functional relationship between human reason and all characteristics which are uniquely human. For example, consciousness of the self and of the self being in the world is dependent upon the independent variable of reason. As reason increases, so does the capacity to attain those characteristics which are uniquely human. Only when reason reaches the human level are the characteristics which are uniquely human manifested.

An important consequence of reason is free will. Again there is a functional relationship between reason and free will, with the amount of reason determining the capacity for free will. A human being has more reason, and therefore more free will, than a monkey, which has more free will than a rodent, which has more free will than a tree, which has none because it does not possess the ability to reason. There is a distinction between existential free will and free will possessed by other living beings. Not only is there a difference in the degree of free will, but humans also have the capacity, through the ability of self-transcendence, i.e., through the ability to transcend immediate experience, to consciously reflect upon their choices, even by apriority, and to become aware of the advantages and disadvantages of different alternatives.

Humans do not inherently possess complete freedom. Potential free will is not an event, rather, it is a process of becoming more free by transcending those conditions which influence one's existence. Frankl feels the assumption which he calls "pan-determinism" is both erroneous and dangerous. Pan-determinism is defined as the view of humans as not being able to rise above any conditions whatsoever. Humans are not fully conditioned and determined. Although an individual is influenced by such conditions as biological, psychological, and sociological conditions, he is ultimately self-determining in that it is he who chooses whether to give in to conditions or transcend them.[1]

In order to transcend conditions which limit freedom, an individual must first become aware of what those conditions are. Once this awareness has occurred, the individual will be able to deal with those conditions and finally transcend them if he chooses to do so. If an individual does not try to become aware of conditions which influence his behavior, he will remain less free than what his level of potential free will actually is. A person's level of freedom is dependent upon how aware he is of the conditions which influence his behavior and upon how much responsibility he takes to transcend those conditions.

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[1] Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), pp. 206-207.

Because an individual possesses free will, he is responsible for who he is and what he will become within his potential. An individual is ultimately responsible for the choices he makes and for the resulting consequences of those choices. According to Frankl, freedom could degenerate into arbitrariness unless it is used in a responsible manner.[1] For Frankl, being responsible is one of the essential aspects of being human.[2]

Addressing the question of what is uniquely human necessarily leads to holistic considerations. One cannot negate the importance of any human aspect, whether it be somatic, psychic, or spiritual. All that is uniquely human involves the integration of the whole person.

Throughout history there has been much said about the relationship between the mind and the body, and many opposing theories regarding this topic have developed. According to D. M. Armstrong, theories of the mind and body which attempt to reduce body to some aspect of the mind are known as mentalist theories. An example of a mentalist theory is the position of Hegel and the Absolute Idealists, who maintained that the material world is in fact not material at all, just seemingly so; instead, it is really mental or spiritual in

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[1] Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, p. 209.

[2] Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 25.

and phenomenologically processes may be considered existential or uniquely human.

Because of consciousness of the self and of the self being in the world, humans develop a wide range of concerns. Paul Tillich states that humans not only have concerns about things such as food and shelter, but they, unlike other living beings, also have spiritual concerns. Any concern can become extremely urgent to an individual and claim ultimacy for his life. Tillich refers to the state of being ultimately concerned as "faith." Humans manifest this state in many concerns, e.g., in success, in national interests, and in a Supreme Being. Faith is an act of the whole personality; it is the most centered act of the human mind.[1] Soren Kierkegaard says that faith requires radical trust and risk; it requires an individual to take "the leap of faith." This leap is not a decision of the emotions alone, rather, it is a decision of the whole self, i.e., of the mind, will, and feeling aspects.[2] Humans have the unique capacity to have faith. They not only have the capacity for this wordly consciousness, they also have the capacity for other worldly consciousness as well. Humans have the capacity to articulate the presence of a Supreme Being and of a metaphysical, other

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[1] Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), pp. 1-4.

[2] Roger Lincoln Shimm, The Existentialist Posture, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Association Press, 1970), p. 53.

nature. Contrary to the mentalist theories are the materialist theories, which attempt to reduce mind to body or to some property of body.

A compromise between the mentalist and materialist positions is the Dualist position. A Dualist theory maintains that mind, which is immaterial, and body, which is material, are distinct, and yet in some way related. An example of a Dualist theory is Cartesian Dualism. A Cartesian Dualist believes that the mind is a single, continuing, non-material or spiritual substance which is somehow related to the body. Interactionist and Parallelist theories are also Dualist positions. An Interactionist theory is one that holds that the body acts on the mind, and the mind in turn reacts on the body. A Parallelist theory is one that maintains that while the body acts on the mind, the mind is incapable of reacting back on the body. A form of this Parallelist position is found in the thought of T. H. Huxley, and it is known as Epiphenomenalism. Huxley says that consciousness is only a by-product of the operations of the brain. While experiences are seen as more than just the functioning of the brain, they are not able to react back on this functioning in any way.[1]

This brief review of only a few of the various positions regarding the question of how the mind and body are related

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[1] D. M. Armstrong, A Materialist Theory of the Mind (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), pp. 5-9.

was intended to point out the lack of certainty in this area.

It seems to me that the real question involved is not whether the brain and the body are related, since both are material and since this relationship can be empirically shown, rather, the real question involves the relationship between the brain and the mind. Is the mind a distinct, metaphysical entity which is independent of the brain, but which is influenced by the brain and is capable of influencing the brain in return? Or, is what is considered "mind" directly due to the functioning of the brain? It seems to me that this latter view is the case. The mind and brain are not distinct and independent from one another, rather, they are one in the same. Because of the extremely complex development and structure of the human cerebral cortex, humans have the capacity for consciousness of the self and for being conscious of consciousness. With this consciousness there developed a notion of mind, which viewed the mind as being independent and complete in and of itself. But mind is not independent of the brain; it is the unified whole of the physiological functionings of the brain. This is to say that while the mind and the brain are one, the mind is more than just the summation of the physiological functionings of the brain: it is a Gestalt, or unified whole, which is more than the sum of its parts, and which in fact determines the parts, or physiological functionings. Thus, while that which is considered to be mind, or the unified whole of the physio-

logical functionings of the brain, is composed of those functions, it in turn, while being the unified whole, determines what the physiological functionings will be. If this is the case, i.e., if the mind and the brain are one, and if the brain and the body are one, then the mind and the body are one. This holistic position implies that the mind directly effects the body and vice versa. That which is uniquely human, or the spiritual realm of that which is human, in order to existentially experience the self and the world, requires both the mind and the body of a human being. As Frankl says, wholeness is the integration of the somatic, the psychic, i.e., instincts, drives, complexes, conditionings, etc., and the spiritual aspects. It is only this three-fold wholeness that makes humans complete.[1]

Spiritual Motivation

Since this position focuses on the spiritual realm of human beings, or on that which is uniquely human, it will, when dealing with motivation, also focus on motivation which is uniquely human. While humans share differing types of motivation with other living beings, on the continuum of motivation there lies a region which is specifically human, and which is existential in nature. This is to say that human motivation consists of characteristics which are similar to

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[1] Frankl, The Unconscious God, p. 28.

the motivation of other living beings, yet at the same time human motivation consists of characteristics which are not shared by other living beings, and which are uniquely human.

Motivation is found on different levels and in varying degrees. As with consciousness of the self and free will, there is a functional relationship between a living being's level of reason and it's level of motivation. Thus, as one's level of reason increases, so also does his level of motivation. Every living being is motivated in some way, and all are on the continuum of motivation. Although human beings share some of the same characteristics of motivation with other living beings, that is to say there is overlap on the continuum of motivation, there is, on this continuum, a unique region which is specifically human in nature, and is therefore within the spiritual realm.

Types of motivation which humans share with other living beings include drives, instincts, conditioning, and certain needs, such as a need for food, water, shelter, etc. These types of motivation are within and due to the psychic or physiological aspects of either humans or other living beings. An example of this psychic or physiological type of motivation which humans share with other living beings, and which has already been mentioned, is the need for food. A human being is motivated in the same way that other living beings are motivated to the acquisition of food for the sustaining of life. This type of motivation is shared and is within the

overlapping area on the continuum of motivation. To say that these forms of motivation are shared with other living beings certainly does not negate their importance in an individual's life. An individual is motivated to action by his whole being. But humans possess a motivational dimension which is unique and which transcends the psychic and physiological realms. This motivation is due to those characteristics which are uniquely human, namely, consciousness of the self and of the self being in the world, and is thus spiritual motivation.

Since humans have the capacity to be conscious of the self and to articulate this consciousness, they are able to reflect upon, and become aware of, objects and goals which would phenomenologically enhance the self. This phenomenological assessment of objects and goals which are potential means to enhancement of the self leads to a rejection of the objects and goals which are seen as not being able to enhance the self, and to an acceptance of those objects and goals which are seen as being able to enhance the self. When an object or a goal is seen as being able to enhance the self, worth is placed upon that object or goal, and is thus valued by the individual who is doing the assessing. An individual is throughout his lifetime engaged in this process of assessing, and therefore has a complex set of values which he interprets as being able to inhance the self. Humans, through the capacity of being conscious of the self, have the unique

ability to determine which object or goal would be phenomenologically enhancing to the self, and thus they have the unique ability to arrive at, and become conscious of, values. To become phenomenologically aware of what would enhance the self requires a recognition and articulation of the self: it requires a consciousness of the self. An animal who is not conscious of the self cannot phenomenologically reflect upon the objects and goals in its environment which would enhance the self. While an animal is concerned with, and motivated by, needs which must be met in order to maintain life, humans, through being conscious of what the self lacks and of what is desirable for the enhancement of the self, have, are aware of, and are motivated by, values.

It is an assumption of this position that the primary motive of that which is uniquely human is the enhancement of the self through values, or, the will to fulfillment. Through the striving toward, and attaining of, that which is represented by values, one is enhanced and moves toward existential fulfillment. Although an individual is motivated by such factors as drives, instincts, and conditioning, he is able, through that of the spiritual realm, to see areas in which his conscious self is lacking or desiring, and is able to choose how he will fulfill these areas, and thus himself. When an individual conceives of an object or goal that would enhance the self, he places worth on it, and thus values it. This process of placing worth on objects or goals is based on

either prior experience or on apriority. To be conscious of the self, to focus attention on the self, and to seek ways in which to enhance the self are all uniquely human, and therefore this type of motivation is spiritual in nature.

The term "value" will be used here to denote worth placed upon an object or a goal by an individual who feels that the attainment of this object or goal will produce enhancement of the self or self-fulfillment. One acquires his values through means which can be placed on a continuum. On one end of this continuum are values acquired because of an unconscious and arbitrary introjection of values belonging to others, and on the opposite end of the continuum are values acquired through a conscious and responsible free choosing of values. This is to say that one has values which are freely, consciously, and responsibly chosen; values which may have there roots in introjection, but which are nevertheless semi-consciously and freely chosen; and values which are completely introjected. These are just three of the many possible ways on this continuum in which an individual acquires values. Values which are unconsciously and arbitrarily acquired may justly be considered uniquely human because while the acquisition is within the psychic, the presence is in the spiritual, i.e., the will to attainment of these values is nevertheless for the conscious fulfillment of the self.

It seems appropriate at this point to elaborate on what composes an introjected value. Rogers says that a young child

gradually learns what is acceptable and nonacceptable behavior according to the views of others. Since a young child desires and needs love, he learns what types of behavior will induce love from others, and on the other hand, he learns what types of behaviors will not induce this affection. Eventually, he begins to hold the same attitude towards himself as others do when he behaves in a certain way, and thus, he begins to introject values of others for the sake of experiencing love and acceptance. Rogers says that when one introjects values from another, he is not using his own experience as a locus of evaluation, rather, he is allowing others to evaluate for him, and thus the values which he introjects may be incongruent with his actual experience. In a highly complex culture, the sources of values which are introjected are many, e.g., parents, church, teachers, government, peers, television, etc. Even though the usual adult feels that his values are his own, the majority of his values are introjected from individuals of groups which are significant to him.[1]

Representing the opposite end of the continuum are those values which are freely, responsibly, and consciously chosen. When an individual acquires values in this fashion he is conscious of the self and of his experience, and he responsibly

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[1] Carl Rogers, Freedom to Learn (Columbus, O.: Charles E. Merrill Publishing, 1969), pp. 243-246.

chooses those values which he consciously feels will enhance the self. A person who acquires values in this way transcends conditions of worth imposed upon him by others and chooses his values consciously and freely.

Values which are introjected are uniquely human not only because other living beings cannot have values which others hold introjected upon them, but also because introjected values still pertain to the phenomenological effort of enhancing the conscious self. Although these values are conditioned, and therefore have their origin within the psychic realm, they operate within the spiritual realm. Along with values that are introjected, humans have purely spiritual values, which are values that are freely and consciously chosen. Thus, there are two main levels of values: the purest and highest values are the spiritual values, and the lower values are the values which are introjected and have their origin in the psychic realm. Along with being motivated by such physiological and psychic factors as drives, instincts, and conditioning, humans are motivated by spiritual and introjected values, with the latter form being a lower level of unique human motivation.

It seems important that if the primary motive in life is the enhancement of the self through values, and if, as Rogers says, the usual adult's values are mostly introjected, then, in order to reach a higher level of free will, one should consciously reflect upon the values which he holds, and determine

whether he has freely chosen a value or has had it introjected upon him. If an individual is not conscious of how he acquired his value system, and if this value system is motivating him through life, he could feel a deep incongruence because he is not living in tune with his true existential self.

There seems to be a distinction between a value and a need. Needs are necessary for maintaining either a human being or another living being, and a value is the result of worth being placed upon an object or a goal for the enhancement of the self of a human being. Values apply only to humans because only humans are able to reflect upon, and be conscious of, the self, and to see objects or goals in their environment which would enhance the self and potentially lead to fulfillment of the self.

Satisfying needs maintains humans or other living beings, but does not enhance the conscious self. Growth does occur because of the satisfaction of needs, but this is primarily physical, and while an individual is a holistic entity, the satisfaction of needs is indirect at best in supplying means for the enhancement of the self. The source for this enhancement is values. In their purest sense, values are freely chosen; on the other hand, needs, in their purest sense, i.e., needs which are not due to something such as a physiological addiction or a psychological dependency, are not freely chosen, rather, natural needs are given. The only choices in-

volved with needs are whether or not to satisfy them, and if so, how to satisfy them. For example, if an individual is hungry and needs food, the need is given, and the only choices the individual has are to eat or eventually starve, and whether to have meat or fish. Needs are met for the maintenance of the organism and are given, while values are for enhancing the self and are freely chosen, or, in an unhealthy situation, values are introjected.

There seems to be a distinction between the needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and values. Maslow says that people are motivated by needs which form an ascending hierarchy of priority. Needs which are lower on the hierarchy must be satisfied to a sufficient degree before needs higher on the hierarchy emerge as motivating forces.[1] The needs on Maslow's hierarchy from the lowest to the highest are: physiological, safety, belongingness and love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Attaining the level of self-actualization is the highest fulfillment of the self.

Each group of needs on Maslow's hierarchy has its own characteristics. The most basic of human needs are physiological needs, which include needs for food, drink, oxygen, activity and sleep, sex, protection from extreme temperatures, and sensory stimulation. After these needs are sufficiently

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[1] A. H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), p. 107.

satisfied, an individual is able to move to the next level on Maslow's hierarchy. This level is concerned with safety needs. An individual is motivated to ensure a certain amount of certainty, order, structure, and predictability in his environment. Belongingness and love needs follow the safety needs. A person who is being motivated by this group of needs desires affectionate relationships with others and group membership. After satisfying the belongingness and love needs to a sufficient degree, a person becomes motivated by self-esteem needs. Maslow says there are two types of self-esteem needs. One type of self-esteem needs is self-respect, which is desire for competence, confidence, personal strength, adequacy, achievement, independence, and freedom. The other type of self-esteem needs is esteem from other people, which includes prestige, recognition, acceptance, attention, status, reputation, and appreciation. The highest level of Maslow's hierarchy contains the self-actualization needs. A person who is motivated by self-actualization needs strives to become everything that he wants to become. He is motivated to completely use his talents and capacities, and to reach his highest potential.[1]

Thus, according to Maslow, as an individual ascends the hierarchy of needs, the preceding level or levels of needs must be phenomenologically satisfied to a certain degree be-

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[1] Maslow, pp. 80-92.

fore the next level of needs is focused on. On the other hand, an individual can be motivated by his values even though other needs are not met, even to a large degree. Although values are at times governed by needs, they are able to transcend needs and motivate an individual toward the fulfillment of the self, irrespective of environmental conditions. If one is responsible and consciously reflects upon his spiritual realm, he can choose to transcend his needs as represented on Maslow's hierarchy, and live according to his values.

It seems to me that the top two levels of needs on Maslow's hierarchy are uniquely human and are not inherent needs, rather, they are values. An individual is motivated toward attaining self-esteem and self-actualization not because of an inherent need, but because he places worth on those goals and therefore values them. This is not to say that if one strongly values a positive self-esteem and does not attain it, his well-being will not be affected. A value may evolve into a phenomenological need for an individual in which not attaining the value may lead to difficulties, but this is not inherent, rather it is a value freely chosen or introjected. The top two levels on Maslow's hierarchy are values which may become needs because of a phenomenological stance. On the other hand, needs may also become values, e.g., one valuing food or sex.

To say that humans are inherently motivated in a process potentially leading to the satisfaction of the inherent need

of self-actualization is to say that humans are inherently good. It is an assumption of this position that when an individual is conceived, the self of his spiritual realm is that of a tabula rasa. From the point of conception and throughout his lifetime, an individual's spiritual realm develops through a phenomenological processing of experience, whether that experience is physiological, environmental, cognitive, emotional, or spiritual in nature. An individual is ultimately free to choose how to phenomenologically process experience and from this he is free to choose what he will become. An individual does not just have an inherent tendency to move toward self-actualization, nor does he just have an inherent tendency to be narcissistic and asocial, instead an individual has the potential to choose either. This is to say that humans are not inherently good or bad, but rather are ultimately free to choose what they will become. An individual who strives toward self-actualization is not being motivated by an inherent need, but by a freely chosen or introjected value which he has concerning self-actualization.

The primary motive for that which is uniquely human is the enhancement of the self through values. An individual is motivated toward fulfillment of the self because of reason and because of consciousness of the self. Because of this reason and consciousness of the self, an individual sees wants and areas in his life which are not fulfilled. He sees how he can improve his lot and how he can enhance his phenomenological self. Before that which is existential develops in

an individual, he has a sense of fulfillment, but when the consciousness of the self begins to form due to the development of reason, he begins to place worth on objects or goals which he feels would enhance the self, and if he does not attain the goals or objects to his phenomenological satisfaction, the initial sense of fulfillment is weakened. One reason why introjected values are potentially detrimental to the sense of existential fulfillment is that one seeks to attain the value not for the fulfillment of who he is, but for the approval and acceptance of others. If one holds an introjected value which is not his own, the value may be beyond or below his potential for attainment, and although he strives to attain it, even if he is not intrinsically motivated to do so, he may never find the phenomenological satisfaction or fulfillment which he feels the value will give.

This is not to say that in the quest for the fulfillment of the self humans are basically narcissistic, for the value of altruism can be seen as a goal which could lead to a sense of fulfillment. The concept of self is being used here to denote self-concept, self-identity, and the total realm of one's existential experience. When one discusses existential fulfillment, it must be done in spiritual terms. An individual seeks to fulfill that aspect which is uniquely human, or the spiritual realm, and although humans are holistic, motivation which is uniquely human is existential in nature, and must be understood in that context.

The position presented here regarding motivation is similar to the position propounded by Viktor Frankl. Frankl says that the primary motive in life is the will to meaning, which is the striving to discover a meaning in one's existence. This meaning is unique for each person because it can and has to be fulfilled by each person individually and personally. It is only when this happens that meaning becomes significant enough to suffice a person's will to meaning. A person's meaning of existence is not originated by that person, but instead it is discovered by him.[1]

What is the meaning of life? Frankl says that this question cannot be answered in a general way. The meaning of life is different for each person. It is not even the same for each person from day to day. Thus, the meaning of life in a general way is not important, what is important, however, is the meaning of life in a specific way for a given point in time. A person should not try to discover some type of abstract meaning of life because each person has a specific, concrete mission to fulfill. A person should not ask what the meaning of life is for him, but instead should realize that it is he who is questioned by life.[2]

An individual discovers the meaning of life through realizing values. Frankl says there are three types of values:

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[1] Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, pp. 154-157.

[2] Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, pp. 171-172.

the first type are creative values, which are experienced by achieving tasks; the second type are experiential values, which are experiencing that which is beautiful and good, and especially by loving another individual; and the third type are attitudinal values, which are experienced through dealing with one's inevitable distress and suffering.[1]

Values do not drive or push an individual, but rather they pull him. This is because of freedom: a person is free to choose between accepting or rejecting the possibility of fulfilling a potential meaning. A person does not have a moral or religious drive. He is not driven to behave morally, instead he chooses to behave morally. He does not do this just so that he can have a good conscience, but he does this for a cause which he has committed himself to, for a person which he loves, or for his God.[2]

The will to meaning and the will to fulfillment are similar, and yet there seems to be a subtle distinction between the two. Deriving meaning from life leads to fulfillment. One finds meaning in order to reach fulfillment. An individual is not motivated to find meaning in and of itself, rather one is motivated toward fulfillment through the meaning which his values give. This is to say that if one has meaning in life he is not necessarily fulfilled, but if one is phe-

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[1] Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. xiii.

[2] Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, pp. 157-158.

nomenologically fulfilled he perceives his life to have meaning. The will to fulfillment subsumes the will to meaning. Thus, it seems to me that the will to meaning is not the primary motive in life, instead, the primary motive in life is the will to fulfillment, which is motivation due to a desire to attain existential fulfillment through the meaning derived from one's values.

One finds existential fulfillment through the meaning which is derived from actualizing his values. Within everyone's value system there is a dominating value which is of the utmost importance to an individual. This dominating value is the primary of the primary of motives: it motivates an individual and influences his life like no other value. It influences the structure and content of the rest of one's value system and it is the value which one seeks to actualize above all others. This dominating value is the crux of an individual's value system.

An individual's dominant value corresponds to what Tillich refers to as one's ultimate concern. This notion was briefly mentioned above, and since it is extremely relevant to an understanding of human motivation, it will be elaborated upon at this point.

According to Tillich, humans, along with every living being, are concerned about those things which are vital to their existence, e.g., satisfying physiological needs. But humans are unique from other living beings in that they also

have spiritual concerns, e.g., humans have concerns in cognitive, aesthetic, social, and political areas. Some of these spiritual concerns are important to an individual, and often extremely important, and any of them, or any of the concerns pertaining to those things which are vital to one's existence, can become ultimate in an individual's life. An individual's ultimate concern demands from him the total giving of himself to that concern, and it promises to give total fulfillment in return. The fulfillment offered by an ultimate concern is promised even if all of one's other concerns have to be subjected to it or rejected because of it. Tillich refers to this state of being ultimately concerned as faith, and in the act of faith an individual not only accepts the unconditional demand made upon him by his ultimate concern, but he also accepts the promise of ultimate fulfillment. Such fulfillment is threatened, however, if one does not obey the unconditional demand of his ultimate concern.[1]

Tillich says an example of faith is the faith of the people of the Old Testament. For these individuals, faith is the state of being ultimately concerned about Jahweh and about what he means regarding ultimate demand and promise. In his name the commandment is given: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5). Tillich says that this

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[1] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, pp. 1-2.

is what ultimate concern means and that these words make clear the nature of genuine faith, which includes the unconditional surrender to that which is the subject of one's ultimate concern.

Another example of faith that Tillich offers is the ultimate concern with success, which he says is the god of many in the extremely competitive Western culture. This ultimate concern demands of those who hold it the unconditional surrender of themselves to its requirements, even if these requirements are the sacrificing of other important values. It threatens social and economic failure if its demand is not obeyed, but if it is obeyed, it promises fulfillment.[1]

According to Tillich, the state of being ultimately concerned is faith. Although it does not matter what the content of ultimate concern is for the formal definition of faith, the subject of one's own ultimate concern is of infinite importance to that individual.[2] A person with an ultimate concern has the intense desire to actualize the content of that concern.[3] For everything that is a content of ultimate concern is made into a god. If an individual's ultimate concern is a nation, he will make the name of that nation sacred and he will see the nation as having qualities which

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[1] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, pp. 2-3.

[2] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, p. 4.

[3] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, p. 116.

far exceed its actual functioning. Or, if an individual's ultimate concern is success, he will be ready to sacrifice all other values in his life for the attainment of power and social influence.[1]

Faith is a movement of one's total personality. It takes place in the center of one's personality and includes all of its aspects: it is the most centered act of the human mind. Faith is not due to just one aspect of an individual's total being, rather, all aspects of one's total being are united in the act of faith, and faith has a decisive impact on each of them.[2]

Tillich states that an individual cannot have two ultimate concerns at the same time, because if he did, one of the concerns or perhaps both of them would not really be ultimate. An ultimate concern would comprise the other.[3] All of one's preliminary concerns are subject to his ultimate concern. An individual's ultimate concern gives direction and unity to all of his other concerns; it is the center which integrates one's personal life. An individual who does not have an ultimate concern is one who does not have a center. This situation, however, can never fully be arrived at, but only approached,

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[1] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, p. 44.

[2] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, p. 4.

[3] Paul Tillich, Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 58-59.

because an individual completely without a center would not be a human being. For this reason every individual has an ultimate concern, and every individual has faith.[1]

It is the structure of human reason that enables an individual to be ultimately concerned and to know the difference between his ultimate and preliminary concerns. Human reason contrasts humans from other living beings. It makes possible such things as language, freedom, creativity, the search for knowledge, the experience of art, and a centered personal life. Reason is the necessary precondition of faith, and faith is the process in which reason fervently reaches beyond itself. Reason is required for faith, and faith is the fulfillment of reason.[2]

The primary motive of that which is uniquely human is the desire to attain existential fulfillment through the meaning derived from actualizing one's values, and the core of this primary motive is an individual's ultimate concern. As the core of one's value system, an individual's ultimate concern takes priority over the rest of one's values, and although one is motivated by the fulfillment which he feels the actualization of his values will give, he strives to actualize his ultimate concern above all others. For example, if an individual's ultimate concern is money and power, he

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[1] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, pp. 105-106.

[2] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, pp. 75-77.

will strive after money and power, foresaking other values along the way. He may devote all his time and energy to his job, trying to find promotion and recognition at any cost. This is done because the individual feels that by actualizing his ultimate concern of money and power, he will find fulfillment. Another example is if an individual's ultimate concern is his family, he will put his family above all other concerns. He may work hard to provide for them, and he will spend what he feels is quality time with them. A final example is if an individual's ultimate concern is God, he will place God above all other concerns in his life. He may devote himself to a relationship with God, and he may dedicate himself to living according to what he feels is God's will. He has faith in Him who is the subject of his ultimate concern.

One is primarily motivated by the fulfillment which he feels will be acquired by the actualization of his values, and one's ultimate concern is the core of this primary motive. In order to understand how an individual is motivated, it is necessary to explore and deal with his values and ultimate concern. The motivation which is uniquely human, or which is of the spiritual realm, is the will to fulfillment, and the attainment of this fulfillment is found through the actualization of one's values, and especially through the actualization of one's ultimate concern.

Spiritual Health and Illness

This position, when dealing with health and illness, will focus on health and illness which is uniquely human, or which is of the spiritual realm. In order to get a complete picture of health and illness, one must view it from a holistic perspective. When studying human beings through a holistic perspective, one must not just study the physiological and psychic realms as when studying infrahumans, but one must also consider the spiritual realm. Each realm within an individual is closely interrelated with the others, and each has the potential to considerably influence the others. For example, an injury to the physiological realm may potentially effect the health of both the psychic realm and the spiritual realm. Although each realm is closely interrelated with the others, each also has its own specific measure of health and illness. For example, while cancer within an individual may effect the total person, it nevertheless can be specifically measured within the physiological realm.

A human being is comprised of three main, complex component parts, i.e., the physiological, the psychic, and the spiritual, and to get a total picture of how the parts function together, it seems that first one must understand what the individual parts are composed of, and what constitutes health or illness within each part. It is for this reason that the spiritual realm is the focus of this position, not to negate the importance of the other two realms and the

holistic interrelations of all three, but to try to understand what comprises the realm which is uniquely human. With this intention in mind, this position will focus on health and illness which is of the spiritual realm.

An individual's experience of spiritual health or illness may be placed on a continuum. A person rarely, if ever, finds himself in a position of experiencing over time total spiritual health or total spiritual illness, so these two extremes are the two polarities of the continuum, and one's actual experience may be plotted accordingly.

The criteria for placing one's state on the continuum is always a matter of his own subjective experience, and not a matter of any objective standards. One must phenomenologically sense the state of spiritual health in order to be spiritually healthy, and one must phenomenologically sense the state of spiritual illness in order to be spiritually unhealthy. That is to say, there are no objective guidelines for determining whether or not one is spiritually healthy, rather, the only guideline for such a determination is the subjective experience of the individual in question. This means that what composes spiritual health or illness is phenomenological, and not based on an objective norm of behavior. For example, to an objective observer, an individual with a flat affect and seemingly depressed mood might be considered as being spiritually unhealthy, but to the individual in question, he might perceive himself as completely satis-

fying his will to fulfillment, and thus as being spiritually healthy. On the other hand, an objective observer might view an individual as being very spiritually healthy from observing objective behavior, while the individual in question might view himself as being totally miserable and as not being spiritually healthy. In other words, discerning whether an individual is spiritually healthy or unhealthy can only be achieved by exploring that individual's subjective experience, and not by relying on objective observations of behavior.

The experience of spiritual health is due to several factors. The first factor involved in spiritual health is a subjective feeling of satisfying one's will to fulfillment. An individual satisfies his will to fulfillment, which is the primary motive of humans, by the process of actualizing his ultimate concern and other values. This is an ongoing process and not an event: one must continually strive to actualize his values in order to maintain a sense of satisfaction. This satisfaction is phenomenological and has different levels of intensity. If the satisfaction experienced is of at least a sufficient degree, and if it is experienced on what the individual feels is a regular basis, then one will experience a sense of spiritual health. An individual's sense of spiritual health increases and decreases along with the intensity of the level of satisfaction maintained, i.e., there is a functional relationship between one's spiritual health and satisfying one's will to fulfillment: spiritual health is depend-

ent upon one's level of satisfaction.

Another factor which is involved in spiritual health, and which is closely related to the preceding factor, is the experience of existential fulfillment. This fulfillment is due to the satisfying of one's will to fulfillment, and fluctuates with this satisfaction. An individual who experiences existential fulfillment will experience different levels of fulfillment depending upon how his values are actualized. Existential fulfillment is the destination to which the road of the will to fulfillment leads. A sense of existential fulfillment is what gives satisfaction to one's will to fulfillment. It is sought through, and a by-product of, the actualizing of one's values, and it is always a subjective experience. Existential fulfillment is what humans are motivated toward, and it is the attainment of this state which leads to spiritual health.

There are different degrees of existential fulfillment, and an individual has much potential to attain higher levels of fulfillment. The process of attaining this fulfillment is facilitated by one becoming conscious of conditions which influence his behavior and by transcending those conditions so that he can freely and responsibly choose which direction he will take in order to attain existential fulfillment.

Achieving existential fulfillment is also dependent upon the next factor involved in spiritual health, and that is that the values one pursues should be congruent with his authentic

being. It is only by actualizing values which are congruent with one's authentic being that an individual attains existential fulfillment. An individual's authentic being is the core of the spiritual realm, and is void of any facades or illusions. It is the bare and unprotected essense of one's existence. One must actualize values that are congruent with this core in order to attain existential fulfillment, for only values that are congruent with one's authentic being are capable of enhancing the self to fulfillment. To attain fulfillment, or to attain higher levels of fulfillment, one must become conscious of his authentic being, and through an exploration of it discern which values are congruent with it and which are not. Through this process an individual will discover which values are, and which values are not, capable of leading to existential fulfillment.

There are also several factors involved in spiritual illness. The most important factor involved in spiritual illness is not actualizing one's values, especially one's ultimate concern. There are several reasons why an individual is not able to actualize his values. One reason is that an individual's environment might impede the actualization process. For example, if an individual has values which are contrary to those of the environment in which he lives, he will perhaps find it much more difficult to actualize his values than if his values were consistent with those of the environment. Another reason why an individual is not able to

actualize his values is that his values are set beyond his potential to actualize them. This is true of freely chosen values, but is especially true of values which are introjected. It seems that in many cases introjected values are introjected by individuals who hold them as ideal, thus making it difficult for, or beyond the actualization potential of, the individual on which the values were introjected and who is expected to actualize the values. Another reason why an individual is not able to actualize his values is that his values are too ambiguous. It is either very difficult or impossible to actualize a value which is ambiguous. An individual does not know what to strive toward when attempting to actualize an ambiguous value. Fulfillment is easier to attain with values that are articulated since one has a clear idea what to strive toward.

Another factor which is involved in spiritual illness is the actualization of incongruent values. If an individual actualizes values that are incongruent with his authentic being, he will not satisfy his will to fulfillment and therefore will not attain existential fulfillment. For example, the actualization of introjected values that are not accepted as one's own will not give satisfaction to one's will to fulfillment. Values must be congruent with one's authentic being before the actualization of them will lead to existential fulfillment.

In all the above-mentioned cases, an individual's will

to fulfillment is being frustrated. This frustration is due to the inability to actualize one's values and to therefore attain existential fulfillment. Spiritual illness is caused by a frustration of an individual's will to fulfillment. This frustration is perceived by the person as being fairly serious and constant. If an individual does not perceive the frustration as being fairly serious and constant, he will most likely not perceive himself as having spiritual illness, but rather he will only perceive himself as having difficulties in a given time and situation. There are different degrees of the frustration of an individual's will to fulfillment, and whichever degree an individual perceives himself as having depends upon his phenomenological evaluation. Extreme degrees of this frustration could lead to such feelings as anger, depression, and despair, and eventually to an experiencing of an existential void, which is an experience of personal nihility. The experience of existential void is due to the inability to satisfy one's will to fulfillment, and is the most extreme manifestation of spiritual illness.

Since human beings are holistic entities, illness of the spiritual realm effects the rest of one's being, i.e., ones physiological and psychic realms. Along with potentially leading to a neurosis or psychosis, spiritual illness may also lead to spiritual stress. An individual who is not able to actualize his values, or who is actualizing values which are incongruent with his authentic being, is likely to expe-

rience spiritual stress, and not only will his spiritual realm be effected by this stress, but his whole person as well.

Spiritual stress is capable of causing psychosomatic illness. According to Kenneth Pelletier, stress which is prolonged and unabated will wear out the body and decrease resistance. Diseases of adaptation are ordinary diseases which often occur when the body does not overcome or adapt to stress. These diseases cannot be ascribed to stress alone, instead, they are attributed to physiological conditions which are created by the body's effort to adapt to stress and which hasten the occurrence of disorders or renders an individual susceptible to disease. Factors such as heredity, environment, health habits, behavior, and prior illnesses may all contribute in the determination of whether disease will occur due to prolonged stress. Also, these factors may render an individual susceptible to the development of a particular type of disorder due to the condition of general stress reactivity. Prolonged and generalized stress causes an individual to be in a state of disequilibrium which increases his susceptibility to many different types of diseases and disorders.[1] Spiritual illness, as well as spiritual health, not only effects that realm which is uniquely human, but also effects one's entire

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[1] Kenneth R. Pelletier, Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer (New York: Dell Publishing, 1977), p. 76.

being. Therefore, in order to be holistically healthy, one must recognize the importance of spiritual health, and must strive to attain that state.

Spiritual Counseling

The position suggested here does not wish to outline a counseling approach, but merely wishes to offer suggestions of focus. Although counseling is, or should be, attentive to the whole person, it seems that certain difficulties which clients manifest require particular orientations on the part of the counselor. So it is with difficulties of the spiritual realm; a counselor should be attentive to this realm and should be able to deal with it on its own existential level. In a society that seemingly fosters spiritual difficulties by the demands it places upon its people, it seems that a counselor should be sensitive to, and able to help clients overcome spiritual illness.

When focusing on the spiritual realm during counseling, the client's experience of fulfillment is explored to discern if, or how, he satisfies his will to fulfillment. This is done by exploring the client's ultimate concern and other values. Are these values being actualized, or is the actualization being frustrated in some way? Did the client freely choose his values, or were they introjected upon him? Are his values congruent with his authentic being, or are they incongruent? These questions are extremely relevant when

exploring the client's spiritual realm because the bases for their answers influence whether, and how, the client is spiritually healthy or unhealthy. This exploration of the client's values aids the client and the counselor in arriving at a more effective way for the client to satisfy his will to fulfillment by enabling him to become more conscious of his values so that he can sort through them in order to determine which ones lead to spiritual health, and which lead to spiritual illness, and so that he can freely choose values which are congruent with his authentic being and actualize those values in order to attain existential fulfillment.

In order to explore and gain an understanding of a client's spiritual realm, a counselor must enter into the client's subjective world of experience. According to Rogers, each human being exists within, and is the center of, his own subjective world of experience. This subjective world can only be known completely by the individual who experiences it.[1] The best way for a counselor to understand a client is by trying to perceive the world of the client through the client's eyes, i.e., by understanding the client's experience from his private, internal frame of reference.[2]

Rogers says that empathy is needed in order for a coun-

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[1] Carl R. Rogers, Client-Centered Therapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951), p. 483.

[2] Rogers, Client-Centered Therapy, p. 494.

selor to understand a client's internal frame of reference. A counselor who is empathic attempts to understand a client's subjective world of experience as if it were his own, yet remembering that it is not his own. When the counselor can understand clearly the client's subjective world of experience and can explore it freely, he can then articulate this understanding to the client and help the client become more aware of the experience which he only vaguely understood before. Empathy which is highly sensitive is important in helping a client understand himself so that he can change and develop.[1] Empathy enables a counselor to explore the subjective world of a client's spiritual realm. The purpose of this exploration is to discern the values the client focuses on in order to attain existential fulfillment and to discern how his will to fulfillment is being frustrated. Once this is accomplished, the counselor is in a position where he can help the client deal with, and overcome, his spiritual difficulties.

When focusing upon the spiritual realm during counseling, it must be remembered that holistic considerations are extremely important. An individual is a whole comprised of different interrelated aspects. Each aspect affects the others and is affected in return. For example, the status of one's

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[1] Carl R. Rogers, "The Interpersonal Relationship: The Core of Guidance," in Person to Person, eds. Carl R. Rogers and Barry Stevens (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Real People Press, 1967), pp. 92-93.

spiritual realm affects the status of both his physiological and psychic realms, and vice versa. Therefore, when focusing upon the spiritual realm during counseling, a counselor must not ignore the importance of such contributing factors as good nutrition, exercise, relaxation, etc., for the well-being of the spiritual realm, as well as for the well-being of one's total person.

This position advocates the use of an eclectic approach to counseling when focusing upon the spiritual realm, for there are many techniques from different approaches which are effective in dealing with difficulties of the spiritual realm. Whichever techniques are used, however, the counselor should be willing and able, when appropriate, to explore and deal with the client's ultimate concern and other values in order to help the client attain existential fulfillment. The counselor should also help the client realize that he is ultimately free to choose how he will strive for existential fulfillment, and that he is ultimately responsible for these choices and for who he is and what he will become.

To conclude, the spiritual realm is a vital aspect of one's total being, and thus must not be ignored by those in the preventive and curative health care fields. In our present time when one's identity, individuality, and creativity are threatened by the pressures to conform; when mobility brings about isolation and loneliness; when specialization brings about monotony; when one's dignity, self-worth, and

sense of purposefulness are seemingly contingent upon economic factors out of one's control; when one is a slave to time and schedules, rushing through life with never stopping to reflect upon its ultimate purpose; when one blindly and desperately reaches out for fulfillment but finds none because his values, through introjection, are mostly incongruent with his authentic being, and therefore not his own; and when one's very existence is threatened by the cloud of potential nuclear disaster--it seems to me that there is a prevalence of existential concerns and difficulties. A counselor needs to be sensitive to a client's spiritual realm so that he can help the client deal with and overcome these difficulties, and so that he can help the client move toward, and attain, existential fulfillment.

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